

The Wisdom of Miss Susan.

By CLARISSA MACKIE.

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"Your Aunt Susan was a remarkable woman, Miss Molly," said the lawyer, looking keenly at the black gown and young woman before him, "and we must therefore not be surprised that she should have made a remarkable will." He tapped a folded document that lay on the table.

"I am quite sure Aunt Susan has made a wise disposition of her property. I only wish she had been spared longer to enjoy it," said Molly Fancher, her pretty eyes red from weeping.

"As you are the only relative Miss Wood had, and as your name is the only one mentioned in her will, I may as well proceed to make you acquainted with its contents. Ahem!" The lawyer unfolded the document and held it close to his spectacled eyes as he read slowly and impressively:

"I give and bequeath all the property of which I may die possessed, as per items below, to my beloved niece, Mary Wood Fancher, on condition that she does not become the wife of Ralph Newcomb. If she—"

"Stop, please," said Molly quietly. She had arisen and now stood, with pale face and flashing eyes, beside him. "You need not finish reading the will, Mr. Jones. The conditions are preposterous. I can hardly believe that my dear Aunt Susan could have asked such a thing of me. She knew of my engagement to Mr. Newcomb and sanctioned it. She welcomed him into the family as a son and—"

"Sobs choked her utterance, and she pressed a handkerchief to her trembling lips.

"Pray compose yourself, Miss Molly," said the perturbed lawyer. "As I said before, your Aunt Susan was a remarkable woman, and—"

"The will cannot interest me now," said Miss Fancher gravely. "I intend to marry Mr. Newcomb at the appointed time, and you may follow out the terms of the will—whatever they are. How soon will it be necessary for me to vacate the house?"

"Not under six months, as a generous income is provided for that period. In case you refuse to comply with the conditions of the will, Miss Wood has left a sealed document in my hands which definitely disposes of the estate."

Molly bowed soberly. "I think my aunt must have concealed some prejudice against Mr. Newcomb. I hope I am sorry—"

"Her voice faltered again. "You are sure you are not making a mistake, Miss Molly? Pardon me, but it is a large estate—about a million."

"I don't care if it is ten millions," retorted Molly, indignation drying her tears. "I would not barter my love for any amount." She blushed warmly as she met the lawyer's honest, admiring glance and drew down her black veil.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Jones. I am quite sure you will execute my aunt's last wishes in the same conscientious manner that you have always handled her interests." A moment later she had passed from the building and entered her waiting carriage.

When she entered the sober, old fashioned mansion that had been the home of Susan Wood for half a century and which had been her own birthplace Molly Fancher's overstrained nerves gave way for the first time since the lingering illness of Miss Wood had resulted in her death a week before.

In spite of the old lawyer's repeated requests that she should bear the terms of her aunt's will the grief-stricken girl had refused admittance to Mr. Jones until this morning, when she had roused herself from her sorrow and made ready to take upon herself the responsibilities that she had been taught to believe would be hers after Miss Wood's death.

The reading of the will was a shock to her. The loss of the inheritance was as nothing compared to the knowledge that her aunt had secretly cherished a dislike if not a distrust of Ralph Newcomb, Molly's accepted lover. It was this thought that rankled in the girl's mind all that long afternoon while she awaited his coming in the evening.

"Dear heart," he cried cheerily as he entered the drawing room, "if you shut yourself up in this gloomy house much longer without companionship save that of Mrs. Rogers, why, I shall—"

He paused as he turned her face to the soft light of the lamp. "Something unusual has happened, Molly. Tell me what it is."

She smiled bravely at him and stilled her trembling lips. "I have been to hear Aunt Susan's will read," she said slowly.

"Well?" Molly found herself listening for some note of anxiety or even unusual interest in his tone as he asked the question that he had always accorded when riches was a topic of conversation, and she sighed relievedly.

"She leaves everything to me—conditionally."

"And I will be poor with you, and we will live in that delightful studio building!"

Newcomb gathered her into his arms tenderly. "You have made your decision?" he asked.

"Yes!"

"Do you know what you are giving up?"

"I am only sorry that I am bringing you nothing but love, dear," she said earnestly.

"We can get along on that," he said grimly, "with a few little added frills in the way of meat and drink that I may be able to worry out of the editors, but—it isn't fair to you, darling—to leave all this." He looked about the richly furnished room and then back into her eyes.

"You cannot believe that I really love you, Ralph," she murmured protestingly.

"I do now, sweetheart," he said, kissing her lips reverently, and then, a few moments later, he added, "I shall prove my trust in your love, Molly—will you marry me at once—this week?"

"Yes, Ralph," she said.

It was perhaps six months later that Lawyer Jones mounted the last long step flight of stairs that led to the Eyrie, as Ralph Newcomb called his studio apartment. He looked about the bare, uncompromising hall that could not be dignified by the name of corridor and then rapped smartly on the door in front of him.

Molly opened the door—the same Molly who had never lifted a dainty finger in household matters. Her brown hair was in sweet confusion about her pink cheeks and the sleeve of her linen frock were pushed above her elbows. A great gingham apron enveloped her slim figure.

She welcomed him with all her old charm of manner and ushered him into a long, many gabled room, where Ralph Newcomb sat pale and weary eyed before a glowing fire.

"My husband has been very ill," said Molly seriously as the men shook hands cordially. "He has been working too hard and—"

"But he is so much better now. It has been a most trying siege for him." Her red lips closed firmly, and the old lawyer guessed at the unuttered story that lay behind those lips. A glimpse of the bare studio, the remains of a very simple meal, a portfolio of drawings on a chair, over the back of which was thrown Molly's coat and hat—it all spoke of poverty, and the sort of poverty that perhaps is hardest to bear.

The thought of lovely Molly Fancher trudging the streets in and out of editorial offices with a portfolio of drawings and never losing her bright, brave smile of hope and sweet content stirred the lawyer strangely.

"I have come to inform you of the final disposition of your late aunt's fortune," he said rather gruffly, adjusting his eyeglasses and taking an envelope from his pocket.

"I don't believe we are interested in that," remarked Ralph smilingly. "Miss Susan gave us our knickerbocker several months ago. You certainly haven't come to gloat over us, Mr. Jones? Eh, Molly?"

She laughed softly. "We are awfully poor, but we are likewise awfully happy, Mr. Jones. Poor Aunt Susan didn't know—"

"My dear young people," interrupted the lawyer gravely, "Miss Wood did know. In her youth she chose between love and riches, and she preferred the latter, and except for her little niece she was a very lonely and unhappy woman. She gave Miss Molly the same choice, not that she distrusted either of you, but she did want you both to be sure of each other's love."

He paused and cleared his throat as he rustled the document. "I will read: 'I give and bequeath my entire estate to be equally divided between Ralph Newcomb and his wife, Molly Fancher Newcomb.'"

"Poor Aunt Susan! I misjudged her so," cried Molly contritely when they had recovered from their amazement. "But I love to think that she had such faith in us both, after all! We have been very happy, Ralph, dear, even if we have been poor." She moved to her husband's side and slipped her hand in his.

"We will never be any happier," he said solemnly.

Mr. Jones paused when he reached the lower entrance of the studio building and leisurely lighted a cigar. "Very wise for a woman—Miss Wood—very wise, indeed," he said thoughtfully.

Winning the Bet.

A London merchant who had a rather ruddy complexion, after "doing" Glasgow, had some time to wait for his train at St. Enoch station and he thought himself of a little joke.

"What is the name of this station, my good fellow?" he asked of a porter. "St. Enoch station, sir."

A few minutes later he met the same porter and said:

"What did you call this station, porter?"

"St. Enoch's! Dae ye no see the name above the ticket there?"

Just then the train came in, and our English friend got comfortably seated in a third class smoker along with a few more passengers.

"These railway officials are about the worst. They can't be civil," remarked the Londoner.

"That's a confounded lee," said a Scotch farmer.

"Well," said the Londoner, "I'll bet five bob I don't get a civil answer from the first porter I ask a question of."

"Done!" replied the old farmer.

Looking out, he spied his porter and, beckoning him over, asked in his most polite tone:

"Would you kindly tell me the name of this station, porter?"

"Gang awa, ye bacon faced buffler! Pit yer daft head in!" was the answer.

Settled Out Of Court.

By J. LUDLUM LEE.

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Judge Sanford was hearing a case in the — municipal court. The witness in the chair had just been sworn in, giving her full name as Lida Graves. Russell Roe, counsel for the plaintiff and an old friend of the Graves family, had asked her to tell just what she had seen regarding the accident when Mr. Brown had been run down by a large red touring car some two months before. He asked a few direct questions and then turned her over to the lawyer for the other side.

Hugo Holland, counsel for the owner of the automobile, hesitated about putting this lovely girl on the rack of cross examination, and when her great eyes looked helplessly into his he almost felt the case was lost.

"What did you say your name was?" asked Holland, floundering about for a leading question.

"Lida Graves," replied the witness.

"What do you do for a livelihood?" followed up Holland.

Lida turned to the kindly faced judge as if for explanation, and over his face came a sinister smile.

"He means are you a working woman?" explained the judge. Then, turning to Holland, he scowled and continued: "I wish the counsel would stop this tomfoolery and ask questions pertaining to the case. Miss Graves is a lady of leisure—a blind man could see that. Come, come," and he rapped the desk with his gavel.

"You take an oath, do you, that the chauffeur did not sound the horn?" said Holland.

"Yes," answered the witness.

"You swear to that, do you?" reiterated the lawyer.

"How many times do you want the witness to repeat that statement?" interposed Roe for the other side.

This started a warfare of objections and exceptions. The two lawyers and the judge became involved in legal technicalities, Holland asking one question and Roe objecting, the judge seemingly sustaining all objections. The lawyers indulged in personalities and the judge pounded for order. Quiet again reigned in the courtroom.

"From the evidence before me, I render a verdict in favor of Mr. Brown, the plaintiff, for \$1,000. The court will take a recess until 2 o'clock," announced the judge.

Half an hour later Lida Graves and her maid entered a fashionable restaurant, secured a table in a cool corner of the room and ordered a light luncheon. She had come into town at the earnest plea of old Mr. Brown, whom she had seen injured by the touring car and had testified in his behalf.

Slipping her tea, she glanced about the room and, to her surprise, at a nearby table saw the two lawyers who half an hour ago had been so personal in their remarks to each other. The "pinheaded idiot" and the "lambent jawed attorney" had evidently decided to bury their differences in a friendly meal. Mr. Roe caught her eye and in a few moments came up to her table.

"May I bring my friend Mr. Holland over to meet you under more favorable circumstances?" he asked.

"You may not," answered Lida with some spirit. "That man is a brute. Why, Mr. Roe, he accused me of—well, of actually telling an untruth on the stand."

"Oh, well, that's all in the business, you know, Miss Lida," soothed Roe.

"He was paid to do that."

"What do you mean—a man receives money to accuse a woman of—"

Roe saw that his arguments were futile and returned to his friend. Lida finished her luncheon and took the train for Linden Beach, where the Graves family was spending the summer at a fashionable hotel.

Sauntering around the broad piazzas the following Sunday morning she met face to face the two lawyers, and it was inevitable that she must meet the brutal Mr. Holland. Despite her aversion to the man who had cross examined her, she had to yield to the charm of his genial manners.

"I say, Miss Graves," he began, "we're going to appeal that case, you know."

Lida smiled.

"What case?" she asked.

"Why, my case; that is, your case," stammered Holland.

"They looked around for Mr. Roe, but he had disappeared to let them fight it out alone, and when, several hours later, he passed them comfortably settled in a rustic seat under the trees Roe decided that Holland must be more persuasive out of court than in it.

Weeks had slipped by, and one bright Sunday morning found Russell Roe in his white dannels and Lida in her daintiest of summer frocks arguing in the sun parlor.

"But, Miss Lida, it's rank injustice," he was saying. "It's the meanest kind of a trick to go over to the other side. I never would have classed you with the traitors."

"But I'm not a traitor," answered Lida, blushing. "I think lawyers on the whole, and one or two individuals, are a mean lot. Why, their whole stock in trade seems to be calling people horrid names. Mr. Holland accused me of prevaricating, and now you turn about and call me a traitor."

"Well, will you go rowing with me this afternoon or won't you?" asked Roe, with a somewhat legal tone.

"It is not a question of whether I

will or not, my dear Mr. Roe," said Lida. "I simply cannot; I have another engagement."

"Exactly!" sung out Roe, with a triumphant air. "With the lawyer for the other side; with that mean, despicable little Holland; a man who stoops to accuse women of untruth; a man who stoops to steal witnesses; a thief, a—"

"I refuse to listen to you, Mr. Roe," flared Lida, and she turned and left Roe in his wicker chair to finish his cigar in solitude.

Roe's face did not take on a very disconsolate look. Indeed, a casual observer would have said it was overspread with a look of absolute contentment. And later in the afternoon when he saw Lida Graves and his best friend, Hugo Holland, making their way toward the wharf the expression of Roe's face was still that of great satisfaction.

Hugo pulled a fine stroke, and they swung into the little cove in a short time. The twilight shadows fell about them and conversation had lagged. Letting the boat drift slowly where the tide chose to take it, Hugo leaned forward and gazed into his companion's face.

"Let's play court," suggested Holland.

"All right," agreed Lida. "I'll be the judge."

"Not at all," remonstrated Hugo. "You've had no experience in that line. You will be the witness in the chair."

"Well, all right. But what are you going to be?" asked Lida, somewhat bewildered.

"Oh," said Holland, with great authority, "I'll be all the rest. I'm the judge, the jury and the lawyer for both sides. Now, you're on the stand and under oath, remember."

"Promise you won't ask me how old I am nor what I do for a living," laughed Lida.

"I am now talking to the judge," he began, and, turning to an imaginary figure, he continued: "You see the accused, Hugo Lawrence Holland, is desperately in love with the plaintiff, Lida Graves."

"Oh, Mr. Holland," interrupted Lida. "I really do not think—"

"Order in the court," roared Holland. Then, looking directly at Lida, he said, "Will you listen to this suit of Holland for your heart and hand?"

Lida laughed. The situation was irresistible.

"It seems that I must—whether I will or not."

"The one bad feature of the case is the existence of a two legged beast," continued Holland—"one Russell Roe." Looking directly at the witness, he said, "Do you love this monstrosity?"

"Certainly not," asserted Lida.

The entire court seemed greatly relieved.

"On your oath?" added Holland.

"On my oath," repeated Lida.

"And—and—" The counsel seemed to hesitate. He had lost his grip in some manner. Finally, after much halting, he asked:

"And this man, this one Hugo Holland, do you care for him—just the least little bit?"

Lida looked at him for a moment, and then, with a merry twinkle in her big eyes, she said, "Please let me be the judge—just for a minute?"

"All right," said Holland as he gripped an oar for support.

"Ahem," began Lida with judiciary manner. "I think this case should be settled out of court. It seems to me that the plaintiff and the defendant can make satisfactory arrangements without the aid of outside parties."

Hugo now gripped both oars and rowed as if he had entered a varsity race with his life at stake. They were on shore in the twinkling of an eye, and the testimony given there was even more direct, for Lida was in Hugo's arms and her face was very close to his.

Angler's Bitter Memories.

Although angling has been and still is one of the chief delights of my life, something bitter always arises when I think of my fishing experiences.

Taught from my earliest years to handle a rod and throw a fly, it has nevertheless never been my good fortune to grass a really big fish. On the other hand, some of the greatest duffers, so far as angling goes, I have ever known have "wiped my eye" time and again at salmon fishing.

One year or two since I had a friend staying with me at Dupplin castle, who, to the best of my belief, had never before handled a salmon rod or any kind of rod in his life. But almost at the first cast—if one could dignify the action by such a name—he rose, hooked and eventually grassed a forty pounder. Another friend, also a most indifferent fisherman, killed single handed a splendid fish that went all but fifty pounds. But I, who have given years to the game, have never seen my spring balance tally more than thirty-one pounds.

—Earl of Kinnvull in M. A. P.

The Comedian's Wit.

On a first night at the B— theater, a well known comedian once displayed remarkable presence of mind. He was alone on the stage and was supposed to be expecting anxiously the arrival of a friend.

"He comes!" he exclaimed, looking off on the left. "Joy! I had been awaiting him so impatiently."

At this cue his friend entered—on the right! Some one had blundered—but who? There was no time for hesitation, and the veteran player's ready wit came to his aid.

"Sly dog!" he said jocosely to the newly arrived. "You thought to take me by surprise, but I saw you in the looking glass yonder!"

This brought down the house, though the audience had been on the point of blasting the very palpable blunder the friend had made.—London Tit-Bits.

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And Felt They Saved the Honor of the American Navy.

Every graduating class at Annapolis leaves behind it the fame of certain heroes in the line of physical prowess or mental endeavor. One of these heroes was George Dewey, a fine, manly, athletic youth, the pride of the boxing and fencing masters and the terror of all bullies.

In Dewey's class was a youth of an excellent bent for applied mathematics, but so tender of physique that he often suffered from the rough horseplay of his elders. Dewey took the boy under his protection, and the two became fast friends. They swung their hammocks in the same watch on their graduating cruise and when the ship touched at Liverpool obtained permission to run up to London on a day's leave. By rigid economy the two had scraped together a little more than £2 apiece, and they landed in the English capital arrayed in spick and span new uniforms.

A round of sightseeing had reduced their combined capital to 2 sovereigns and their return tickets when their boyish appetites announced the hour of noon.

With the cautious economy of his ancestors the Scotsman suggested a chop-house, but nothing but the best would suit Dewey, and he accordingly steered his chum into the finest hotel he could find.

The two seated themselves at one of the tables and scanned the menu with a magnificent air. The first item that caught their eyes was strawberries and cream, and this, with its reminiscence of home, they proceeded to order.

Now, the time was winter, and strawberries from the hothouse are expensive in London, so it was small wonder that the other guests who had learned the order looked inquiringly at these specimens of the jeunesses doree of the American navy. An Oxford lad who sat next them seemed particularly impressed and turned his large eyes upon them with awe. The strawberries were good, and all went well until the obsequious waiter returned with a bill for £1. The Scotsman nearly collapsed, but Dewey noticed the eyes of the Oxonian upon him and, turning superciliously to the waiter, ordered two more plates.

The middies left with empty pockets, but haughtily conscious that they had saved the honor of the American navy.

AN ANCIENT HIGHWAY.

England's Great North Road Is Two Thousand Years Old.

Before we reached Hatfield, a few miles out of London, we had already been impressed with the magnificence of this Great North road, which is said to have been built by a Mr. Caesar, whose headquarters were in Rome at the time. It is the direct route from London to Edinburgh and has been traveled for so many centuries that the earliest histories of England contain accounts of the movement of troops upon it. It is a great thoroughfare for vehicles of all sorts, motorists and cyclists, and in these modern days there are well worn footpaths along either side for pedestrians. We passed scores of motors, and I was told while in England that the popularity of motoring had noticeably diminished the number of first class travelers by rail. We found the road for its entire length of 400 miles in

perfect condition. In many portions the macadam is said to be nine feet thick. Long sections of the road are oiled, and on no part of it was there any appreciable amount of dust. There are few sharp curves, and the grades are so slight that it has become a great thoroughfare for speedsters, with the result that there are many police traps for which one has to watch. We found that we could stop in almost any little village and get information as to just where the traps were located—as, for instance, they told us at Biggleswade, which is a better looking place than its name, to look out for traps just the other side of Buckden and again in approaching Weston.—Frank Presbrey in Outing Magazine.

Fully Equal.

Aunt Mandy is an old colored woman who for years has done washing for several East Orange families. She has had several matrimonial experiences, and when her last husband died one of her customers attempted to console with her.

"I was very sorry to hear of your husband's death, Aunt Mandy," she said.

"Ya-as, ma'am," said Aunt Mandy. "He was a powerful good man."

"What did he die of?"

"Ah really don't know, ma'am."

"You don't know? Gracious! Couldn't the doctor tell you?"

"Ah didn't have no doctah, ma'am," said Aunt Mandy. "He jes done died a natch'ral death."

It wasn't long, however, before Aunt Mandy had another husband.

"I hear you are married again," remarked her patron one day.

"Ya-as, ma'am," giggled Aunt Mandy. "Ah was done married las Sunday."

"And is your new husband equal to the last?"

"Ya-as, indeedy, ma'am," said Aunt Mandy. "He's jes as equal if not equaler."—New York Times.

Division of Labor.

"What do you want here?" asked the warden of the penitentiary.

"I should like to spend a few days in this institution," said the caller.

"What for?"

"I wish to see how the inmates live."

"What is your object in that? Are you writing a book?"